

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Canceled)
2. (Canceled)
3. (Canceled)
4. (Currently amended) ~~The method as claimed in claim 2,~~ A method for coupling messages of a central control device with decentralized communication devices, comprising:  
\_\_\_\_\_ setting up and/or clearing down a communication connection for the transport of communication data which is performed by at least one first functional unit of a communication network;  
\_\_\_\_\_ controlling the connection function which is performed by a second functional unit of the communication network, wherein  
\_\_\_\_\_ the first and second functional units are spatially separate from each other,  
\_\_\_\_\_ message traffic occurs on at least two partial connection links;  
\_\_\_\_\_ different communication protocols are used on the partial connection links, and  
\_\_\_\_\_ a message is transmitted on the partial connection link directly using a respective communication protocol, in which, for the transformation from one communication protocol into another communication protocol, the message is initially unpacked from the protocol layers of one protocol and then packed into the protocol layers of the other protocol,  
\_\_\_\_\_ in which an Internet protocol is used on a network protocol layer.
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)
8. (Currently amended)~~The method as claimed in claim 7,~~ A method for coupling messages of a central control device with decentralized communication devices, comprising:

setting up and/or clearing down a communication connection for the transport of communication data which is performed by at least one first functional unit of a communication network;

controlling the connection function which is performed by a second functional unit of the communication network, wherein

the first and second functional units are spatially separate from each other,

message traffic occurs on at least two partial connection links;

different communication protocols are used on the partial connection links; and

a message is transmitted on the partial connection link directly using a respective communication protocol,

in which groups of a number of first decentralized devices and second decentralized devices are administered,

in which messages occur from a number of first decentralized devices, the messages are transmitted after passing through a first partial connection link in a second decentralized device in a bundled form and on one second partial connection link, and

in which the messages from/to the second decentralized devices are initially sorted and then processed in the central control device.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Canceled) The system as claimed in claim 9, in which the second communication connection is formed as a coaxial cable or as an optical waveguide.

11. (Currently amended) ~~The system as claimed in claim 9,~~ A system for coupling messages of a central control device with decentralized communication devices, comprising:

a transport network for providing a communication connection;

a control network for controlling the setting-up and/or clearing-down of the communication connection;

a device to control the setting-up and/or clearing-down of a connection in the transport network by a control network, the device being spatially separate from the transport network;

at least one first decentralized communication device to receive and/or issuing a message;

at least one second decentralized communication device to collect and/or distributing messages;

a central control device to issue and receive messages;

at least one first communication connection between the first and second communication devices; and

a second communication connection between the second decentralized communication device and the central control device, the second communication connection being formed as an Internet or ATM network, and the first communication connection being formed as an HDLC-based connection, in which the first communication connection is formed as a bus on a backplane.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently amended) ~~The system as claimed in claim 9,~~ A system for coupling messages of a central control device with decentralized communication devices, comprising:

a transport network for providing a communication connection;

a control network for controlling the setting-up and/or clearing-down of the communication connection;

a device to control the setting-up and/or clearing-down of a connection in the transport network by a control network, the device being spatially separate from the transport network;

at least one first decentralized communication device to receive and/or issuing a message;

at least one second decentralized communication device to collect and/or distributing messages;

a central control device to issue and receive messages;

at least one first communication connection between the first and second communication devices; and

a second communication connection between the second decentralized communication device and the central control device, the second communication connection being formed as an Internet or ATM network, and the first communication connection being formed as an HDLC-based connection, in which, for the case in which a number of second communication devices are connected via a number of second communication connections to the central control device, at least

one device coordinates the messages, which sorts the messages arriving on the second communication connection, which is connected to a device to process the messages.

14. (Currently amended) ~~The system as claimed in claim 9,~~ A system for coupling messages of a central control device with decentralized communication devices, comprising:

a transport network for providing a communication connection;

a control network for controlling the setting-up and/or clearing-down of the communication connection;

a device to control the setting-up and/or clearing-down of a connection in the transport network by a control network, the device being spatially separate from the transport network;

at least one first decentralized communication device to receive and/or issuing a message;

at least one second decentralized communication device to collect and/or distributing messages;

a central control device to issue and receive messages;

at least one first communication connection between the first and second communication devices; and

a second communication connection between the second decentralized communication device and the central control device, the second communication connection being formed as an Internet or ATM network, and the first communication connection being formed as an HDLC-based connection, in which the second communication connection is formed as an ATM network, the central control device has a first and a second central device, a converting device is present in the first central device, for the conversion between protocol layers of the Internet protocol via the ATM network to protocol layers of the Internet protocol via the Ethernet, and the first and second central devices are in connection with each other via an Ethernet connection.

15. (Currently amended) ~~The system as claimed in claim 14,~~ A system for coupling messages of a central control device with decentralized communication devices, comprising:

a transport network for providing a communication connection;

a control network for controlling the setting-up and/or clearing-down of the communication connection;

a device to control the setting-up and/or clearing-down of a connection in the transport network by a control network, the device being spatially separate from the transport network;

at least one first decentralized communication device to receive and/or issuing a message;

at least one second decentralized communication device to collect and/or distributing messages;

a central control device to issue and receive messages;

at least one first communication connection between the first and second communication devices; and

a second communication connection between the second decentralized communication device and the central control device, the second communication connection being formed as an Internet or ATM network, and the first communication connection being formed as an HDLC-based connection, in which the second communication connection is formed as an ATM network, the central control device has a first and a second central device, a converting device is present in the first central device, for the conversion between protocol layers of the Internet protocol via the ATM network to protocol layers of the Internet protocol via the Ethernet, and the first and second central devices are in connection with each other via an Ethernet connection, and

in which the second central device has the device for processing messages.

16. (Currently amended) The system as claimed in claim 14, A system for coupling messages of a central control device with decentralized communication devices, comprising:

a transport network for providing a communication connection;

a control network for controlling the setting-up and/or clearing-down of the communication connection;

a device to control the setting-up and/or clearing-down of a connection in the transport network by a control network, the device being spatially separate from the transport network;

at least one first decentralized communication device to receive and/or issuing a message;

at least one second decentralized communication device to collect and/or distributing messages;

a central control device to issue and receive messages;

at least one first communication connection between the first and second communication devices; and

a second communication connection between the second decentralized communication device and the central control device, the second communication connection being formed as an Internet or ATM network, and the first communication connection being formed as an HDLC-based connection, in which the second communication connection is formed as an ATM network, the central control device has a first and a second central device, a converting device is present in the first central device, for the conversion between protocol layers of the Internet protocol via the ATM network to protocol layers of the Internet protocol via the Ethernet, and the first and second central devices are in connection with each other via an Ethernet connection, and

in which the central control has a device to control a switching unit for the creation of time-slot multiplex connections, and the device is in operative connection with the device to process messages.